Combating Human Trafficking - Factsheet

- Human traffickers prey on those who seek a better life – whether it is a young girl lured away from her family only to be trapped in sexual slavery or an aspiring man who hopes to make a better wage to support his family only to find himself a victim of forced labor.

- At its heart, human trafficking is not a crime of movement, but rather the dehumanizing practice of holding another in compelled service using whatever means necessary, be it physical or psychological. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said, "let's call it what it is – modern slavery."

- It is also a crime: a crime often akin to murder, rape, and kidnapping. It is fluid, responding to market demands, vulnerabilities in laws, weak penalties, natural disasters, and economic instability. And this crime is not limited to one gender, faith, or geographical area, but impacts individuals and societies across our nations and across the globe.

- We all recognize modern slavery when we see, for example, workers locked in a factory, denied wages, and subjected to physical abuse. However, the majority of these cases are not so obvious or so easy to detect. Workers are often victims of fraudulent recruitment practices, such as work offers that misrepresent conditions, excessive recruitment fees, written contracts that workers cannot understand, and switched employment terms after the original contract has been signed. Migrant workers sometimes incur large debts for promised employment, which makes them susceptible to debt bondage and involuntary servitude. Traffickers also confiscate passports and threaten deportation, do not pay wages, restrict movement, and isolate victims from the community that could help them, all as means of keeping victims in compelled service. Moreover, traffickers often use rape as a weapon, whether in a field, factory, brothel, or suburban home.

- We see these all too common scenarios play out around the world and in the United States. The Department of State's *2010 Trafficking in Persons Report* for the first time evaluated and ranked the United States' efforts to combat trafficking. We have found that, in the United States, trafficking occurs primarily for labor and most commonly in domestic servitude, agriculture, manufacturing, janitorial services, hotel services, construction, health and elder care, hair and nail salons, and strip club dancing. While there is a perception that human trafficking exists only among undocumented workers, vulnerabilities exist for legally documented temporary workers who typically fill labor needs in the hospitality, landscaping, construction, food service, and agricultural industries. Additionally, there are U.S. citizen victims, women and girls who are more often found in sex trafficking than labor trafficking.

- No country, including the United States, has attained a truly comprehensive response to this massive, ever-increasing, ever-changing crime. Ten years of focused efforts represent the mere infancy of a modern movement against a wrong rooted in history. Every country is still learning what trafficking is and what works as a response to it. As far as we have come in a decade, more must be done by all of us to fulfill the promise of the Palermo Protocol and our domestic legislation. Through the three pronged response of prosecution, protection and prevention we

must continue to fight human trafficking, as the vast majority of people enslaved today around the world have yet to see any progress.

- Last year, worldwide, there were approximately 50,000 victims identified and just over 4,000 traffickers convicted.Only 335 of these traffickers were prosecuted for forced labor offenses. We cannot focus on one form of trafficking over another or one type of victim over another if we truly want to end involuntary servitude. We must broaden our efforts to ensure that every man, woman, and child is free from forced labor *and* forced prostitution.

- Nor can we sit and wait for the most egregious cases to present themselves. Collectively, we have enough experience and information pointing toward the industries where human trafficking is often found – domestic work, agriculture, construction, restaurants, textile production, and other low wage industries as well as commercial sexual exploitation. Now it is our duty not to wait for victims to come to us, but for us to proactively find and dismantle these illegal operations that reduce people to conditions of modern slavery.

- Four thousand convictions worldwide is also a call for a more robust response to punish traffickers with criminal penalties as called for in the Palermo Protocol. Administrative remedies are not sufficient. The standard we should look to is sentences commensurate with other grave criminal offenses such as rape, kidnapping, and murder. Unfortunately, convicted traffickers continue to pay fines, receive suspended sentences, and return to exploiting trafficking victims after just one or two years in jail.

- Ever present in our work should be the victims and the NGOs that assist them. The United States strives to adopt a victim-centered approach, which is predicated on the notion that a trafficked person is a crime victim whose rights have been violated. We not only have a duty to punish the trafficker, but to offer assistance and restore the victim. For instance, we have established mechanisms that allow for temporary immigration status and work authorization to both restore the trafficked person's dignity *and* incentivize them to seek justice. Not detention and deportation, but comprehensive services and shelter.

- Crucial to the entire system is close collaboration with and support of NGOs. The United States provides financial assistance to NGOs to provide services to victims and works closely with them once they identify potential trafficking cases. Indeed, close collaboration with NGOs in combination with a victim-centered approach yields an increase in the number of prosecutions and convictions.

- We hope that Macedonia continues to strengthen its partnerships with NGOs and others in civil society as it strives for a victim-centered approach. Building trust with trafficking victims for more successful prosecutions is often best achieved with civil society as equal partners from the very beginning of a case.

- We hope that Macedonia continues to work with labor inspectors and other front-line responders to identify more potential cases of forced labor and sex trafficking victims exploited in hidden sectors in the country.

- Most potential trafficking victims are wary of law enforcement officials; this is true in the United States as well as Macedonia. Increasing the practical role of civil society in the victim identification process often allows victims to recount their trafficking experience at their own pace with minimum pressure.

- We hope that Macedonia continues to pursue the vigorous investigation of all trafficking offenses, and will send a message of deterrence by aggressively prosecuting, convicting, and sentencing trafficking offenders, including any official complicit in this crime.

- We must also acknowledge that prosecuting the traffickers and protecting the victims will never truly end modern slavery. Instead, we must examine and change the structures, policies, and practices that sustain forced labor today. Prevention lies in initiatives that, for example, increase labor enforcement in targeted industries; eliminate forced labor throughout corporate supply chains down to the raw materials; and regulate labor recruiting.

- As President Obama stated recently, "We stand with those throughout the world who are working every day to end modern slavery, bring traffickers to justice, and empower survivors to reclaim their rightful freedom." I look forward to our continued partnership.